



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
STATE HOUSE BOSTON, MA 02133
(617) 725-4000

CHARLES D. BAKER
GOVERNOR

KARYN E. POLITO
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

July 9, 2020

Delivered via email

Massachusetts Black and Latino Legislative Caucus
Massachusetts State House
24 Beacon Street, Room 460
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chairman González and Members of the Black and Latino Legislative Caucus,

Thank you for your recent letter regarding police standards and accountability legislation. I was proud to file an *Act to Improve Police Officer Standards and Accountability and to Improve Training* last month and was even more proud to stand with you and members of the Black and Latino Legislative Caucus to discuss the pressing need for law enforcement accountability. The Lieutenant Governor and I and our entire Administration stand ready to work quickly to implement a responsible program for certifying law enforcement officers.

Our legislation is a product of our long-standing discussions with you and your caucus members. It would establish a process to certify police officers, and under which officers could lose their certification for certain types of misconduct that have been found to have occurred, either by a court or by the officer's employer. For example, a conviction of a felony would result in decertification, as would a sustained finding of excessive use of force that includes a chokehold or similar vascular restraint or that results in serious bodily injury, or a sustained finding of conduct that would constitute a hate crime. Our bill also enhances training for law enforcement officers to promote bias-free policing and de-escalation techniques, among several other worthwhile provisions.

There are myriad issues before us in these unprecedented times, but I believe the principles we share in common present a rare opportunity to act quickly and concisely to create a long overdue system for certifying law enforcement officers. I share your commitment to reaching consensus and giving the public the transparent, accountable law enforcement system they deserve. Working together with the House and Senate on the specific, shared principles outlined by the Black and Latino Legislative Caucus and proposed in our legislation, we can increase accountability in law enforcement, instill the most up-to-date, community-oriented policing skills, and protect all of Massachusetts' cities and towns.

I look forward to our continued cooperation on this and many more important initiatives to come.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Charles Baker", with a stylized, cursive script.

Charles D. Baker
GOVERNOR